

A Trespasser

By HONORE WILLISIE

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The snow had disappeared from the valley, hedged up three sides by mountains, but far up in the slopes there were still great white acres of it. Grigsby worried a great deal about these snow patches. At night, when the camp was still, he lay awake hour after hour considering the matter.

The New York stockholders who had sent the young mining engineer out to explore and test the mine had given him no information as to how, when or where to protect his workmen. On Tuesday of the previous week a great wedge of snow and ice had loosened from the peak, had hurtled down the mountain side, gathering speed and size as it went, and had killed Jim Grady, the foreman, without even stopping to drop him after the deed was done.

"The oldest inhabitant" told Grigsby that such would probably be the programme until spring had set in thoroughly.

So for several nights Grigsby worried. Then on a certain cold, drizzling morning he called the men from the mine and set them, one and all, at work on his idea. The idea consisted of a great "V," with its apex turned up the valley, and when completed the engine house over the mine was to set snugly in the angle of a great fence of logs and boulders. It took three days to complete the idea, and when it was done Jack Grigsby squared his handsome shoulders, set his teeth firmly on the amber stem of his pipe and said: "There, by gum! I'd like to see a snowslide harm that!"

The oldest inhabitant, who stood by Jack's side, grinned.

"You've put a lot of work on that thing," he said.

"Well, it's worth it," replied Jack.

"Hub," answered the old miner, "I could 'a' told you something that wouldn't 'a' been any work at all and would 'a' been just as effective as that."

"A nice time to be telling me that!" exclaimed Jack. "Well, what is it?"

The old man pulled a dejected looking envelope out of his pocket, after a long search found a stubby pencil and made a few marks on the envelope back, then walked over to a tree and tacked the paper up on the trunk. Grigsby followed him curiously. On the envelope was written:

"Avalanches are requested not to trespass here."

Jack roared. "Well, you're a great joker."

The old man grinned, but shook his head. "Just as good as your wedge," he answered. "You ain't seen a real slide yet. You want to move your mine, that's what you want to do."

Grigsby looked a little troubled. "The president of the company and his daughter are due here this afternoon, but the weather has been so snappy lately I guess we are safe."

Then to himself as he walked away, "I'd give the world and all to see Madge, but—" Then he looked at the V shaped rampart. "Gee, that would stand anything," he said.

The visitors were not expected until late in the afternoon, but it was only 1 o'clock when the short, fat millionaire and his dainty, slender daughter dismounted from their horses and left them at the group of shacks on the mountain side. Then they descended into the gulch, where the shaft opened.

"Now, remember, Madge, no nonsense," the president was puffing. "These young engineers are all right in their places. But their places are not as sons-in-law of mine. Seems to me you've been showing rather a lively interest in young Grigsby."

Madge sniffed, but made no reply to her father's admonitions. They were an old tale, whose moral did not in the least interest her. Her father took the chaperonage of his pretty daughter very seriously.

Jack Grigsby ran toward them with bared head and outstretched hand, but the president had little time to waste on greetings.

"What in thunder is that mountain or rubbish built around the plant for?" he demanded.

Jack explained the mission of his cherished idea, but the president shook his head.

"Pooh, pooh!" he scoffed. "Fearful looking mess. Better tear it out. Don't need that to keep off a little snow and ice."

Madge interposed tactfully. "Oh, come on," she cried. "I want to see everything."

The three walked slowly over toward the engine house, Jack explaining eagerly.

"Where are all the men?" asked Madge.

"In the mine, even the engineer. We are having some."

The oldest inhabitant grasped Jack's arm.

"For heaven's sake," he gasped, "ring the bell. It's comin'."

The three followed his gaze. Far up the mountain, at the beginning of the valley, a roar, and with the roar it seemed as if the whole side of the mountain was sliding down into the valley—a great, gray mass, that gathered to itself all that barred its path.

"The men are safest in the mines," Jack cried.

He grasped Madge's arm, but the oldest inhabitant thrust him one side. "Manage the old man," he said; "I'll take the girl."

Then with his arm about Madge he

ran with all his strength up the mountain side. Grigsby seized the president's arm.

"Come!" he cried.

The president started out bravely, but his weight told, and with the third step he stumbled and fell. With each heart throb the speed of the snowslide was lessening their chances. Jack tugged at the heavy old man. Now he could see the boulders that bridged the front of the avalanche and now it had taken the very tree to which was pinned the fluttering trespass warning. With a superhuman effort Jack drug the president out of harm's way. Then he sprang himself, scarcely noticing a heavy blow from a whizzing tree top.

In another moment the avalanche was a thing of the past, and a great swathe down the center of the valley was polished smooth as a macadam road. With a single glance to see that Madge was safe, he called to the two men and ran to the shaft opening, over which the slide had passed. It was choked with a mass of logs and ice.

"Find ropes," Grigsby cried. "The Lord knows how many were in the shaft!"

It was an hour of terrible toll, but somehow the three accomplished the task. With hands torn and bleeding, panting and half crazed with fear for those below, they toiled unceasingly—the oldest inhabitant, with the strength of man twenty years his junior, his white hair wet with perspiration; Grigsby, with pale, drawn face, and the president, peeled down to vest and trousers, panting with the best of them.

Grigsby called down through the opening and the answer came back faint, but cheerfully:

"All safe! What's the rip? Send us down a rope."

When all were safe the president climbed to Jack's cabin and sat down heavily. Jack and Madge followed. He looked at Jack closely.

"Great spoke, man, look at your arm!" he cried.

Jack glanced at the blood stained sleeve from which the arm dangled helplessly. "I know it," he answered cheerfully. "A tree top slapped me as the slide passed, but I don't care; every man is safe!"

The president stared at the white dirt stained face. "Madge," he said "I'd like to have you marry this sort of man!"

"That's what Jack and I hoped," an swerved Madge, smiling even as she moaned over the wounded arm.

"That's settled, then," said the president briskly. "Now let's see what I can do for that arm." And if he noticed that the well arm was encircling Madge's waist he did not mention the fact.

By the Full Bench.

A story which used to be related years ago had to do with an incident which happened in Sierra County, Cal., the principal actor in which was Judge Sears of the district court.

The judge was on his way from Nevada to Plumas county. At Downieville there were two young lawyers who had agreed to argue a motion when the judge arrived. Then, as time was passing and both lawyers were also going to Plumas, it was decided to ride along and carry on the argument by the way.

Up the mule trail from Downieville to Monte Cristo, down to Oak Ranch and so on to Eureka the argument proceeded. At Eureka the case was examined with the aid of refreshments, and in due time a decision was reached.

The loser consoled himself with the thought that he had ascended the mountain without being conscious of the grade.

"Possibly the mule felt it as usual," suggested the judge.

"I think from the result that he, too, was absorbed in helping to make up his opinion," said the lawyer.

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ELLEN MC NAMARA.

STATE OF MARY C. DELANEY,

deceased.

Pursuant to the order of George E. Russell, Surrogate of the County of Essex, this day made, on the application of the undersigned, administrator of said deceased to exhibit to the subscriber under oath or affirmation his or her rights and interests in the estate of said deceased, within nine months from this date, or they will be forever barred from presenting and recovering the same against the subscriber.

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EDWARD KENNY, Proctor.

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